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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Friday 7 April 1978 CG NIDC 78/081C



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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

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Approved For Release 2007/03/13 : CIA-RDP79T00975A030600010066-9

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Friday, 7 April 1978.

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[REDACTED] The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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Nicaragua

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Ghana

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USSR : Brezhnev's Vladivostok Speech

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[redacted] Soviet President Brezhnev's speech to party leaders in Vladivostok yesterday indicates that he had met some sharp criticism of economic conditions from local officials. The account corroborates other indications of widespread concern among Soviet officials about the state of the economy and suggests the kind of dissatisfaction Brezhnev may have been responding to in his reportedly critical speech at the Central Committee plenum in December.

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[redacted] Party first secretaries from throughout the Soviet Far East gathered in Vladivostok and evidently took an aggressive approach. Brezhnev termed their comments regarding welfare measures "fair criticisms," and he directed much of the blame and his own criticism at ministries in Moscow rather than at his listeners. This contrasts sharply with the accounts of Brezhnev's previous stops on his Siberian journey in which he was described as dwelling on shortcomings of local leaders.

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[redacted] In Brezhnev's extensive discussion of the local leaders' criticism of the railroads, he noted that plans for investment this year had been increased and declared that problems must be resolved by the relevant ministries. He also took up complaints about the tardy commissioning of construction projects.

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[redacted] When he cautioned against using excuses to avoid responsibility, he aimed his warning at the government ministries, not at the local party leaders. His charge that productive capacities in their regions are not being fully used seemed mild by comparison.

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[redacted] Throughout the trip, Brezhnev's speeches have been devoid of answers or proposals for solving the economic problems discussed. The trip itself, however, appears to have been taken partly in recognition of these problems, and the attitudes Brezhnev encounters may encourage some action when he returns.

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[redacted] In the past, Brezhnev has shown a proclivity for using the party to criticize the government ministries and to try to improve management. Indeed, the December plenum was followed by party initiatives on economic problems and a further erosion of the status of the government.

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[redacted] Since the December plenum, Brezhnev's unofficial deputy, party secretary Kirilenko, has chaired three conferences of party and government officials in the Central Committee--including one on the railroads. On the day of the railroad conference, the party published a resolution approving a Leningrad initiative to improve transportation that stresses local party efforts to coordinate economic activity across ministerial jurisdictions.

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[redacted] An article by Minister of Railroads Pavlovskiy in *Pravda* last week provided another indication of the ongoing high-level debate on the USSR's lackluster economic performance. In that article Pavlovskiy blamed other ministries for the deficiencies in railroad transport. [redacted]

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RHODESIA: Ministerial Council

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[redacted] The leaders of the Rhodesian transitional government have agreed on the allocation of portfolios in the ministerial council, the 18-member body that will administer government affairs under the agreement signed by Ian Smith and the three black leaders early last month. An announcement naming the new ministers may be made today.

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[redacted] Each black leader has chosen three associates to share authority with nine white appointees in running a group of ministries during the transitional period. The black and white appointees will act under the direction of the executive council--composed of Ian Smith, Bishop Muzorewa, Ndabaningi Sithole, and Chief Chirau.

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[redacted] Among the ministries allocated to Sithole's supporters are defense and foreign affairs. A Sithole representative will also sit on the combined operations staff, the organization

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now responsible for combating the insurgency. Muzorewa's appointees will share with whites the ministries of justice, law and order, finance, and several others concerned with domestic affairs. Supporters of Chief Chirau have been named to administer education, internal affairs, local government, and several lesser ministries.

25X1 [redacted] Formation of the ministerial council marks an important step forward in implementing the internal settlement, although the sticky problems of a constitution and national elections must still be tackled. Press reports from Salisbury indicate that Smith and his black colleagues have also chosen representatives to staff the committee that will draft a new constitution.

25X1 [redacted] Since casting their lot with Smith, Muzorewa and Sithole have tied themselves even closer to the internal settlement, significantly decreasing the chances that either can be weaned away to support the UK-US settlement plan. In the few public statements they have made recently, both have sounded more like government officials than nationalist leaders. [redacted] 25X1

ISRAEL: Government's Popularity

25X1 [redacted] Israel's sharp differences with the US and the dimming prospects for a negotiated settlement with Egypt do not appear to have substantially affected the core of Prime Minister Begin's public support.

25X1 [redacted] A respected public opinion survey published yesterday indicates that 56 percent of the Israeli public believes the Begin government is doing everything it can to obtain peace and that only 18 percent believes it should be doing more. Another survey, also published yesterday, shows that a small plurality believes US policy supports the Arab states more than it does Israel.

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[redacted] The US Embassy believes that the peace rally last weekend, attended by some 20,000 people, represents an impressive but still limited segment of the Israeli public. Should the new movement pick up momentum, however, it could become a catalyst for a national debate on the issues affecting peace.

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USSR: Focus on Energy Conservation

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[redacted] //The new long-term policies to conserve energy being launched by the USSR are in apparent recognition of the country's long-term energy problem. The party leadership has chosen to publicize long-range savings of gasoline and diesel fuel, the critical sector in Soviet fuel consumption.//

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[redacted] High-level officials from the party, the Council of Ministers, and 10 oil-producing and consuming sectors were summoned to a special meeting at Central Committee headquarters on 20 March. Andrei Kirilenko, second in command of the party Secretariat and the top secretary for industrial affairs, ordered accelerated development and production of lightweight, energy-efficient internal combustion engines.

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[redacted] //In energy terms, "internal combustion" translates to gasoline and diesel fuel. The party leadership has now moved beyond short-term tactics stressing energy savings in all categories to strategies designed to conserve those fuels that have been in shortest supply since mid-1976.//

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[redacted] //The measures proposed--retooling for new engine types--are costly and promise no immediate relief. The upgrading of refineries, which holds at least equal promise for mitigating gasoline and diesel fuel shortages, continues to be neglected.//

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[redacted] //Demand for gasoline and diesel fuel for construction, agriculture, motor transport, rail, shipping, and aviation has outstripped the capability of Soviet refineries to produce it.//

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[redacted] Soviet refineries still stress output of medium and heavy fuels. The Soviets could increase yields of gasoline and diesel fuel by installing secondary refining processes. Equipment to upgrade gasoline quality--without increasing volume--is being installed widely.

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[redacted] There is very little activity in building and installing catalytic crackers that would be needed to convert medium oils to diesel fuel. Continuing Soviet stagnation here is probably explained by the severe competition between ministries for investment capital. This is the most likely arena for the next Soviet move in Moscow's long-range program to reduce gasoline and diesel fuel shortages. [redacted]

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Hajek Steps Down

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[Redacted] Czechoslovak emigre sources have told Western news-men that Jiri Hajek will step down as spokesman for the Charter 77 dissident movement. The sources cited nervous strain and the desire to spend more time with his family as the primary reasons.

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[Redacted] Hajek has been a driving force in Charter 77 since its inception in January 1977, and his departure would be a blow to the Czechoslovak dissident cause. Personal considerations doubtless played a role in his decision, but there have been reports of tactical differences among the dissidents and this may have been another important factor.

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[Redacted] Some dissidents have been pressing for a more confron-tational approach toward the regime. Hajek considered some of the proposed activities illegal and feared they would give the police a pretext to crack down. His departure could signal that the more radical groups have prevailed. The US Embassy in Prague has already heard that the 10th anniversary of the Soviet in-vasion will, at a minimum, bring forth a variety of new declara-tions.

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[Redacted] The dissidents will be quick to deny that Hajek's de-parture represents a splintering, and by implication a weaken-ing, of the movement. One supporter recently said that the Chart-ists had always been a disparate group but that, despite "all manner of insidious pressures" from the regime, they had managed to hang together. [Redacted]

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BRIEFS

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Nicaragua

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[REDACTED] Nicaraguan President Somoza is offering some new concessions to his domestic opposition but is showing increasing displeasure toward foreign critics.

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[REDACTED] In a news conference this week, Somoza charged Venezuelan President Perez with trying to topple the Nicaraguan Government and condemned him for asking President Carter, during his visit to Caracas, to comment on the overthrow of another government. Somoza praised the US President's commitment to nonintervention, but he told the US Ambassador privately that he was displeased that the two presidents had discussed Nicaraguan affairs without informing him.

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[REDACTED] On the domestic scene, Somoza appears pleased that he is now getting some feedback from the opposition and mentioned that he is considering some new concessions such as an end to the emergency law, an amnesty, and judicial reform.

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Ghana

25X1 [redacted] Ghanaian lawyers and doctors have gone on strike to protest the alleged rigging of last week's referendum, in which the government claims General Acheampong's proposal for a non-party, "union" government was narrowly approved. Accra is outwardly calm, but if engineers carry out threats to join the strike there will soon be shortages of electricity, water, and petroleum products, increasing the possibility of clashes between Acheampong's supporters and his critics.

25X1 [redacted] There is some doubt, however, that the professionals have the organization, tenacity, and public support to maintain an effective strike. Ghana's bar association plans to challenge the legality of the referendum, and the issue may thus be fought out in the courts--if the government allows the process to go forward--rather than through long strikes.

25X1 [redacted] //Acheampong is hardening his attitude toward dissent, [redacted]

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25X1 [redacted] He has now arrested leading members of the three opposition groups formed to campaign against "union" government. Former General Afrifa, the

leader of the principal group, may have escaped abroad. Acheampong has also banned public meetings called to discuss the results of the referendum.//



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